United Nations S/PV.3535

Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3535th Meeting
Friday, 12 May 1995, 3.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mérimée	(France)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cárdenas
	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Czech Republic	Mr. Kovanda
	Germany	Mr. Henze
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Nigeria	Mr. Gambari
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Rwanda	Mr. Bakuramutsa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David Hannay
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/1995/342)

95-85447 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, room C-178

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/1995/342)

The President *(interpretation from French):* I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Georgia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chikvaidze (Georgia) took a place at the Council table.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General in Abkhazia, Georgia, document S/1995/342.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1995/384, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to the following revision to be made to the text of the draft resolution contained in document S/1995/384 in its provisional form.

Operative paragraph 6 should read as follows:

"Reiterates its call to the Abkhaz side to accelerate significantly the process of the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons by accepting a timetable on the basis of that proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to guarantee the safety of spontaneous returnees already in the area and regularize their status in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement;".

The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, His Excellency, Mr. Alexander Chikvaidze. On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome him and invite him to make his statement.

Mr. Chikvaidze (Georgia): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the functions of President of the Security Council for this month. We believe that under your skilful guidance the Security Council will successfully continue its difficult work.

On behalf of the Head of State, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, and the people of the Republic of Georgia, I should like to extend my warmest words of appreciation to the United Nations and its Security Council and, personally, to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to his Special Envoy, Ambassador Brunner, for the attention and goodwill they have accorded the dramatic processes in Georgia.

I should like to express my gratitude to the members of the group of countries known as "Friends of Georgia" and the Russian Federation as facilitator for their tireless efforts to bring about a comprehensive political settlement of the protracted conflict in my country.

Allow me also to commend the joint activities being carried out by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for monitoring the cease-fire.

During my visit to New York I have had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the States members of the Security Council and wish to thank all of them for their sincere concern and understanding of our problems.

In its efforts to achieve political and economic reforms, Georgia faces a multitude of problems. While public opinion on how our society and different political leaders should handle them may vary, there is clear

unanimity and resolve when it comes to threats to the territorial integrity of the country and the continuing anguish and ordeal of the thousands of people expelled from their homeland. Indeed, nothing can change our resolve to achieve the unconditional and timely return of the refugees to their homes, to reach a fair, negotiated settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia and thereby define its political status within the borders of a unified Georgia as recognized by the international community.

The Abkhaz leadership, however, constantly seeks to evade, ignore and negotiate away its obligations, Security Council resolutions calling for the unconditional return of refugees notwithstanding. Unfortunately, that is a characteristic trait of the phenomenon known as "aggressive separatism", which emerged from the debris of the communist system and is being nurtured by its die-hard followers. It does not consider compromise a moral category, and tends to ignore fundamental principles of international law.

Obsessed with that ideology, the Abkhaz leadership has blatantly violated all the peace agreements that were expected to bring about a cease-fire and a constructive dialogue between parties. Despite the bitter experience of treachery, the Georgian Government has always remained committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the self-respect and honour of all parties involved. We have never turned our backs on the peace process, nor have we attempted to resort to military force. However, it is not easy to carry on peaceful negotiations with a party that resorts to "ethnic cleansing" and genocide as a means of consolidating its ill-gotten gains.

As members are aware, about 300,000 refugees and displaced persons are now scattered throughout Georgia, further draining its devastated economy and posing a serious threat to nascent market reforms. In light of this situation, it was sheer cynicism on the part of Ardzinba to write a letter to the High Commissioner for Refugees requesting financial support for the return of just 200 refugees per week. If we proceed according to his timetable, instead of an unconditional and orderly return the refugees would have to queue up for decades in humiliation, ignorant of their own fates.

Ardzinba's regime has always sought to thwart the peace process. His no-compromise policy is bringing our peaceful efforts to naught and could ultimately damage the peace talks beyond repair. However, past experience would suggest that by acting irresponsibly he is seeking to gain time. The question of the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia has undoubtedly reached a crucial point as a result of the new turn of events. From the outset, Ardzinba has demanded that the political status of Abkhazia should be defined, as a precondition for the return of the refugees. Now, when we have finally worked out a document reflecting the political status of the autonomous republic and obtained concurrence on it from the representatives of the United Nations and the Russian Federation; now, when the prospect of a federative arrangement for Georgia has taken on a practical dimension; and now, when the Abkhaz representatives have been invited to work with us to draft a new constitution — Ardzinba comes up with a new proposal.

Contrary to the resolutions of the Security Council, which reaffirms Georgia's territorial integrity, while formally agreeing to a federative order for our State, he offers to sign an agreement between two subjects of international law, thereby dragging out the negotiations and threatening not only Georgia's integrity, but also setting a pattern for the endless fragmentation of States.

We strongly believe that the Security Council should voice its concern on this matter and clearly condemn the attempts by the Abkhaz side to reach their secessionist goals through sophistries and the rape of international law. My people have always counted on the help of the United Nations, and have repeatedly expressed their confidence in the Organization and in the international community as a whole. Regrettably, with the passage of time, that attitude is showing signs of changing. There is a reason for that tendency: the Security Council has already adopted 12 resolutions and 6 presidential statements on Abkhazia; while those documents gave moral support, they were less effective in terms of yielding tangible, practical results.

The 300,000 people displaced by the conflict have become refugees in their own homeland. The Secretary-General and the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations have had the opportunity to see their plight first hand. For the world today, caught up in the flames of numerous ethnic conflicts, 300,000 may not be a large number. However, the hardships of the refugees are shared by all Georgians, who see the refugees' repatriation as the foremost objective. In other words, we have 300,000 refugees who have the wholehearted support of 5 million Georgians. When they witness the helplessness of the international community's peace efforts, people's confidence in the effectiveness of

international mechanisms is eroded and this could precipitate a disastrous outbreak of uncontrollable actions.

I am accompanied here by Mr. Tamaz Nadareishvili, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia. No one is in a better position to relate what has happened in Gagra and Sukhumi, what is going on in Gali and in Abkhazia as a whole.

The present situation compels me to repeat myself: people's patience is wearing thin. They are ready to cross the Inguri river in large groups, with or without the consent of the Abkhaz side. Though they are unarmed, it is not hard to imagine the welcome they will be given by the separatists. In January, we managed to prevent a dangerous sortie by several hundred armed people who had set out for Abkhazia. In future, the number of such actions may well increase and turn into a nationwide, uncontrollable march to Abkhazia. The Head of State of Georgia, Mr. Shevardnadze, is doing everything in his power to defuse the intensity of popular dissatisfaction and keep uncontrollable emotions in check. But believe me, as time goes on, it is becoming more and more difficult.

We realize that individual Member States, as well as the United Nations, are constrained in their actions, but, if combined, their joint efforts may yield positive results. We strongly believe that the Security Council must be more outspoken and clear on this matter. Taking into account the present realities, namely the intransigence of the Abkhaz authorities over the organized repatriation of refugees and displaced persons to Abkhazia, the Government of the Republic of Georgia deems that the following actions need to be taken.

The foremost issue is the repatriation of refugees. If this problem is not solved, it will put the whole peace process in jeopardy. The return of the refugees must start from the Gali region under a strict timetable and continue in stages to other regions of Abkhazia.

The present turn of events undoubtedly puts the question of the expansion of the mandates of both UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping forces back on the agenda, for we can no longer afford for them merely to be extended.

In the light of the forthcoming CIS summit in Minsk, which will, *inter alia*, consider the extension of the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping forces and the means to improve their effectiveness, we would welcome the Security Council's broadening of the UNOMIG mandate.

In order to step up the process of repatriation, observers must be charged with additional responsibilities, especially in monitoring and recording human rights violations. This step will carry both practical and psychological implications. The returnees must know that when they are back home they are going to be taken care of.

We believe that the impartial recording of violations and repression may serve as a deterrent to potential perpetrators. This will also provide the international community with first-hand, reliable information and will offer means to prevent unlawful actions.

The 1994 CSCE summit in Budapest expressed its deep concern over "ethnic cleansing" and the massive expulsion of people, predominantly Georgians, from the areas where they lived. In this regard, we commend the Security Council for noting these findings of the CSCE final Document.

The world community strongly condemns the practice of genocide and "ethnic cleansing" and seeks to find effective measures for their prevention. As the Secretary-General has said, genocide is plotted and carried out by cynical leaders who think that their crimes will go unpunished; moreover, they believe that their deeds will prevail.

We possess more than enough evidence to prove that similar atrocities have been perpetrated by the Abkhaz separatists. Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, are welcome to dispatch their representatives to Georgia for an impartial and fair examination of materials at our disposal.

Aggressive separatism, which routinely entails these atrocities, is proving to be one of the most severe challenges on the eve of the twenty-first century. There is hardly a country today that does not have the potential for a conflict similar to the one in Georgia. Indeed, many Member States are currently embroiled in a struggle with their own secessionist movements. The particular relevance of the Georgian case for the rest of the world lies in the danger of the Abkhazian separatists' consolidating and legalizing their ill-gotten gains. This would set a most unwanted precedent for all Member States, a precedent of "victorious separatism" that would serve as an inspiration for every separatist movement worldwide.

This is hardly the signal the United Nations wants to send on the eve of its fiftieth anniversary. All available means at the disposal of the United Nations should be brought to bear to resolve this problem so that it can enter its second half-century with a landmark achievement.

Future political adventurers must know that their deeds will not go unpunished, that any attempt to infringe on the territorial integrity of States or threaten the lives of innocent people will be severely prosecuted and the perpetrators brought to justice. In this context, we would welcome the establishment of an international criminal court, a permanent juridical body capable of addressing the most serious crimes posing a threat to the international community. We look forward to concluding a convention on the establishment of this critically needed body in the near future and are ready to cooperate closely with other Governments on this important issue.

In closing, allow me to welcome the Security Council's intention to extend the mandate of UNOMIG, for we believe that the United Nations presence in the region is essential to its stability and to the peace process as a whole.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to vote on the draft resolution before it, as orally amended, in its provisional form. If I hear no objection I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution to renew the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

The negotiations are still beset by difficulties. The conditions set by resolution 971 (1995) for an extended presence of UNOMIG in Georgia have been only partially met. Nevertheless, we believe that a strong commitment to a political settlement of the crisis should be confirmed at two different levels. First, there should be support for the negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the contribution of the Russian Federation as a facilitator and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which should participate in every stage of the negotiations and of the reconciliation process. Secondly, there should be an active UNOMIG presence in the field and constructive collaboration between the United Nations Observer Mission and the Commonwealth of Independent States peace-keeping force. UNOMIG's presence will foster complete compliance with the cease-fire, respect for the disarmament measures provided for by the Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces, signed almost exactly one year ago in Moscow, and the creation of the conditions needed to guarantee the safe return of refugees, particularly to the Gali region.

We continue to be concerned by the attitude taken mainly by one of the parties towards the institutional negotiations. This attitude may not be totally compatible with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that have been reaffirmed in all the Council's resolutions and presidential statements on this matter and reflected in the OSCE's Paris Charter.

The above-mentioned difficulties also seem to lead to a cycle in which the dim prospect of a political settlement is compounded by the failure of the Quadripartite Commission on refugees to meet for three months. This encourages retaliation and violence by militias against the refugees who have already returned. In the Secretary-General's recent report, a different level of responsibility seems to emerge from the episodes of violence recorded. Serious concerns are raised by the many murders, arrests and episodes of torture. These incidents can, in fact, be considered a continuation of the "ethnic cleansing" that raised concerns in the decisions of the Budapest summit of the CSCE.

My delegation believes that significant aspects of the process that must lead to a political settlement of the crisis are defined more clearly in today's draft resolution than in texts previously adopted by the Council. I refer, in particular, to the following elements: mention of the new constitution on which the Government of the Republic of Georgia is actively working; the priority given to the return of all refugees to their places of origin, starting with the Gali region; inclusion of the principles of the decision on Georgia taken at the CSCE's Budapest summit; and emphasis of the UNOMIG operation's need to contribute, realistically and within the framework of its current mandate, to full respect for human rights.

In our opinion these contents send a clear signal that the Council has a well-defined orientation to the course of the crisis and show that recourse to violence does not pay.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): At the outset, I should like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should like also to express my delegation's deep appreciation to Ambassador Kovanda for the excellent manner in which he guided the Council last month.

Further, allow me to express my delegation's gratitude to those who formulated the draft resolution before us concerning the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

I wish to take this opportunity also to welcome in our midst Mr. Chikvaidze, the Foreign Minister of Georgia.

My delegation has closely followed the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. In this regard, we have come to learn that apparent breakthroughs in the political negotiations have, not infrequently, been followed by developments that have the effect of negating the apparent initial gains. Consequently, progress in the political negotiations has at best been mixed.

However, this is certainly not due to a lack of effort on the part of the international community. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Russian Federation have all been untiring in their combined efforts to find a comprehensive settlement, despite the often less than exemplary cooperation of the parties concerned. Indeed, these combined international and regional efforts are a true reflection of the call contained in the Charter for cooperation between our Organization and regional arrangements.

In this regard, it would be remiss of me if I were to fail to commend the achievements of UNOMIG and the peace-keeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in preventing a further escalation of violence. Furthermore, we recognize the valuable contribution of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as of the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, to the search for a peaceful political settlement through negotiations between the conflicting parties in Georgia.

My delegation is none the less fully cognizant of the fact that challenges still abound. We share the concern felt by the international community regarding the frustratingly slow progress in resolving the issue of refugees and displaced persons. We note the continued lack of a secure environment, particularly in the Gali region, and the observation contained in the Secretary-General's report about the failure of the Government of Georgia, as well as of the Abkhaz authorities, to guarantee the safety of the displaced persons and repatriants as agreed upon in the Quadripartite Agreement on the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons of 4 April 1994. It is of the utmost importance to come to an acceptable arrangement on this matter, and we urge the parties to abide by the principles of international humanitarian law.

In addition, we deem it imperative that the Abkhaz side significantly accelerate the process of the return of refugees and displaced persons, in accordance with the proposals of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It would indeed be difficult to overemphasize the valuable role of the UNHCR in alleviating the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is therefore with a deep sense of concern that my delegation notes the financial difficulties that are currently being faced by the UNHCR, thereby threatening the continuation of its valuable presence in Georgia.

However, without in any way minimizing the plight of the refugees and displaced persons, it is worth noting that the humanitarian situation is merely a symptom of a more fundamental problem — that of the impasse in the political negotiations. We are concerned, for example, that the Secretary-General has reported that there was a renewed escalation of violence, in mid-March and early in April, in the Gali region, thereby impeding the convening of further rounds of negotiations.

We welcome the recent initiative of the Russian Federation in drafting a text which seeks to develop in greater detail the elements of a federal solution that could provide the basis for a comprehensive political settlement. The cooperation of all the parties in this effort is indeed essential. Genuine negotiations always require a spirit of conciliation, mutual concessions and a commensurate political will to achieve a peaceful and just solution.

In this regard, the Indonesian delegation would like to reiterate its strong support for the sovereignty and

territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. It further reiterates its deep concern about the renewed hostilities and, therefore, encourages the efforts of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Russian Federation.

Indonesia's contribution to UNOMIG, albeit modest, is a reflection of our commitment to assist in the international community's effort to find a political settlement to the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. We too share the Secretary-General's observation that an untimely withdrawal of UNOMIG would lead to open confrontation and the resumption of conflict.

In the light of these considerations, we are in full support of the extension of UNOMIG's mandate, and we shall therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia and his joining in the work of the Security Council today.

My delegation is obliged to the Secretary-General for the submission of his report on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, in compliance with resolution 971 (1995) dated 12 January. In that report we are told that, by and large, there has been no progress in the political negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia and that the current situation reflects a stalemate, which, in our judgement, might, were it to persist, lead to an open clash between the parties to the conflict.

According to the report, the opposing positions involve, on one hand, a solution on the basis of a federal State within the borders of Georgia and, on the other hand, the solution favoured by the Abkhazians — one based on a union between two equal States. As a result, the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons is paralysed, because the parties continue to apply different criteria as to the way repatriation is to take place or the numbers it is to involve. These differences are preventing compliance with the stipulations of the Quadripartite Agreement signed in Moscow in 1994 as to the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons — an Agreement designed to guarantee the safety and security of those individuals. This, in turn, ties the hands of the Quadripartite Commission, which, as the Secretary-General's report tells us, has not met since 16 February of this year.

We urgently appeal to the parties to resume political dialogue to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. As the Secretary-General rightly says in paragraph 44 of his report,

> "tense political stalemates in which neither peace nor war prevail do not allow the creation of the stability and public confidence essential for economic assistance, reconstruction and a return to normality for the people concerned." *(S/1995/342, para. 44)*

We therefore feel that it is necessary for the *démarches* of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General *vis-à-vis* the Government of Georgia and the Abkhazian authorities to be continued, with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator and the involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

One element contributing to the exacerbation of difficulties is the situation of insecurity spawned by offences committed in the Gali region and the kind of weaponry in the hands of the local residents, which, in turn, makes possible the violation of the provisions of the Agreement on a cease-fire and the separation of forces, signed in May 1994 in Moscow.

Another difficulty is to be found in the restrictions being imposed by the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities on the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) military observers, which are keeping them from doing their job of supervising weapons stockpiles and patrolling. So long as the parties do not show themselves determined to improve the situation in those zones and to cooperate extensively with UNOMIG, we believe it will be difficult to create favourable conditions for the voluntary return of the refugees.

However, we are pleased that the cooperation between UNOMIG and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the peace-keeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is continuing to develop satisfactorily.

In conclusion, we take the view that the international community in general and the Council in particular must continue to pay close attention to the negotiating process in order to ensure that the parties comply fully with their political commitments and, especially, to ensure that they guarantee full respect for international humanitarian law,

particularly as it relates to protection for refugees and displaced persons.

My delegation has taken due note of the report of the Secretary-General and endorses his recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for another six months, bearing in mind that the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States seem ready to extend the mandate of the peace-keeping force with a view to preventing open confrontation and any resumption of the conflict.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): Mr. President, permit me first of all to express my delegation's sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Under your guidance which, as in the past, has been characterized by so much grace, great skill and confidence, the business of the Council is in very good hands indeed.

I should also like to express appreciation to Ambassador Kovanda for the especially able manner in which he guided the Council's work during the month of April.

May I also, on behalf of my delegation, welcome to our midst the Foreign Minister of Georgia, His Excellency Dr. Alexander Chikvaidze.

The latest report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 1 May 1995 (S/1995/342), indicates, regrettably, that progress in the peace process has continued to be difficult despite the important efforts of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and others concerned to mediate peace in the region. At the political level, the occasional outbursts of violence, such as occurred in the Ghali region in mid-March and early April, have critically undermined the climate of confidence that is necessary for continuing negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Moreover, the political talks about the status of Abkhazia which takes due account of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia have not made the desired progress. In the words of the Secretary-General,

> "The organized repatriation of refugees and displaced persons to Abkhazia, remains at a standstill" *(S/1995/342, para. 13)*

partly because of the objection of

> "The Abkhaz side to the ... speedy return of refugees and displaced persons." *(ibid.)*

Nigeria associates itself fully with the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Russian Federation and the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In this connection, we underline the need, as reflected in the current draft resolution, for the parties to achieve substantive progress in the negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and to refrain from any unilateral action that could complicate or hinder an early and comprehensive settlement.

My delegation believes that the issue of the return of the refugees and displaced persons is crucial to the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The current situation, in which both the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities are unable to guarantee the safety of the displaced persons and the protection of the repatriated under the quadripartite agreement of 4 April 1994, is unfortunate and should be reversed. To this end, it is essential not only that suitable political and security conditions should be established to encourage the return of the refugees, but also that, as is reiterated in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution before us, all parties should come to a quick acceptance of the timetable proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for voluntary returns.

The cooperation between the United Nations, the CIS and the OSCE in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict augurs well for peacemaking and conflict resolution in the post-cold-war era and therefore deserves the support of the international community, which it needs if the desired goal is to be achieved. Against the background of Nigeria's own participation in similar subregional United Nations peace efforts in West Africa, my delegation understands very well the vital necessity for additional contributions to be elicited from as many States as possible in order to support the peace process, for otherwise that process could be unduly protracted and difficult to resolve. We call also on the parties to demonstrate increased flexibility and to negotiate in good faith as well as to improve their overall cooperation with UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force.

Finally, my delegation will gladly vote in favour of the current draft resolution, which extends UNOMIG's mandate for an additional period of six months, in the

conviction that UNOMIG has a continuing, vital role to play in the search for peace in Georgia.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I thank the representative of Nigeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): It gives me great pleasure indeed to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We are confident that the Council will successfully discharge its duties during your stewardship of its business this month. I also wish to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Kovanda of the Czech Republic for the excellent manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during the busy month of April. He is the best slave-driver we have in the Council.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/1995/342) on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. Unfortunately, what emerges from the report is not encouraging. It is disappointing to learn that more than 300,000 men, women and children are still languishing in the refugee camps waiting anxiously and in anguish to return to their homes. It is most unfortunate, to say the least, that all these innocent people had to flee their homes in fear of their lives for no other reason but that they happened to belong to an ethnic group wrongly considered to be inimical to the interests of the ethnic separatists and purists of Abkhazia. We are witnessing here a consciously crafted policy of "ethnic cleansing", so rightly characterized as such by the Budapest summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

It is sad indeed that ethnic intolerance has uprooted a whole people from the comfort of their homes and subjected them to live in cramped and squalid conditions in refugee camps. These are people who remain away from their birthplaces against their will, and so they shall remain for as long as the Abkhaz authorities maintain their present separatist, ethnocentric policies.

The few people of Georgian origin who have been brave enough to return have been tortured and murdered in cold blood. The harsh and inhuman treatment meted out to the few returnees is meant to frighten the refugees into leaving Abkhazia permanently.

This state of affairs cannot go on indefinitely. History teaches that no people can be for ever deprived of their national birthright or forced into eternal submission. It would not come as a surprise if in the next few weeks or months these people decided to march en masse back to their homes, and the consequences of such a move, given the present mood of the Abkhaz authorities, are too ghastly to contemplate. There is no doubt that any attempt by the refugees to return to their homes in large numbers would cause panic in Sukhumi and this could result in the mass murder of the returnees by the Abkhaz militia. Yet we are told that, in their frustration, this is what the refugees intend to do. The international community should do everything possible to avert this potential disaster. The poor and deteriorating security situation in the Gali region does not augur well for the return and resettlement of refugees. It must be improved as a matter of urgency, and pressure must be brought to bear on the Abkhaz authorities to allow the return of refugees in conditions of safety and security.

My delegation is also disappointed by the lack of progress in the political talks. Over a year has passed since the Council adopted resolution 881 (1993) but the parties' positions remain polarized. There is however a ray of hope. The cease-fire is still holding for one thing, and the parties have started talking again, for another. Unfortunately, the parties continue to take two fundamentally different approaches to the nature of the new Constitution and the form the State should take.

The draft resolution we are about to adopt reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia with Abkhazia as an integral part thereof. It is our hope that the talks currently taking place between the two parties in Moscow will usher in an era of peace and national reconciliation in a fully integrated Georgia.

My delegation supports an extension of the mandate of UNOMIG for an additional period of eight months. We have taken note of the Secretary-General's concern that an untimely withdrawal could lead to the resumption of hostilities. At the same time, we hope that the parties to the conflict will guarantee that this extension is used profitably to further a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and not to maintain or entrench the status quo. Lastly, we are at least encouraged that there is a satisfactory level of respect for the United Nations and its forces in Georgia, unlike in other parts of the world where the authority of the United Nations and its peace-keeping personnel is defied with reckless abandon. Let me end by paying homage to the brave men and women of UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping forces for the sacrifices they are making in Georgia to help the people of that troubled country make peace with one another.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Botswana for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Bakuramutsa (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. You can count on my delegation's cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities. I should also like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Kovanda, the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, on the wisdom and skill he displayed in guiding the work of the Security Council during the month of April.

My delegation extends a cordial welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia and wishes him to know that we understand better than anyone the situation in his country because of the similarities between our two countries. My delegation commends the Secretary-General for his report on Georgia dated 1 May 1995. It also notes with satisfaction the ongoing consultations aimed at introducing a new Constitution with a view to a comprehensive political settlement.

My delegation is however concerned at the insecurity in the region and the violations of international humanitarian law through the premeditated policy of systematic elimination on the part of one party to the conflict, with the aim of taking control of a territory by terrorizing and massacring innocent civilians. Unfortunately, this policy is being pursued in the name of misplaced nationalism, ancient grievances and an avid thirst for vengeance.

My delegation is concerned at the objection of the Abkhaz side to facilitating the speedy return of displaced persons and refugees. It seems to us that the most recent proposal by the Abkhaz to repatriate a mere 200 individuals a week is, in a sense, motivated by a policy of exploitation that seeks to take advantage of the situation facing refugees and displaced persons to attain other goals. For this reason, my delegation recommends that the observers' mandate be strengthened so that human rights violations may be detected. It suggests that individuals with competence and experience be sent to Georgia, as opposed to the neophytes that were sent to my country.

As you are aware, genocide and ethnic cleansing are not the problem of the society or individual country concerned; they are a universal problem. In this context, the United Nations adopted an international convention to which most countries have acceded. My delegation is astonished at the failure of the countries of the region to take action to support and save the victims of this inhuman behaviour.

My delegation supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 12 January 1996. It also firmly supports the proposal to establish an international tribunal to bring the persons guilty of human rights violations to justice. This tribunal should not be a mere clone of existing tribunals but should be adapted to the situation prevailing in the region and respond to the specific problems facing the population there. My delegation also supports the idea of establishing a federation as the key to resolving the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict.

At a time when preparations are in full swing at the United Nations for the commemoration of its 50th anniversary, a few Member States are falling victim to genocide and ethnic cleansing. The basic principles which underpin this Organization are being flouted. The cry of "never again" which rang out almost 50 years ago remains a dead letter because certain Members of the Organization are disregarding it or encouraging those who are doing so, while others still, through their silence, are accomplices. We do not see how the Organization will be able to face the community of nations with its head held high if these fundamental principles which are the very *raison d'être* of the Organization are not respected.

As the wise men of the President's country have put it, it is never too late to do good. That is why my delegation calls for appropriate action, by which we mean effective action, to salvage what can be salvaged. In this context, my delegation will cast a vote for this draft resolution.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Rwanda for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for this month. I believe that with your vast diplomatic experience, wisdom and talent you will guide the work of the Security Council efficiently and guarantee constructive results. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador

of the Czech Republic, for his contribution to the work of the Council in the month of April.

The Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the delegation of the Republic of Georgia and its participation in this meeting of the Security Council and to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia for his important statement.

The Chinese delegation has always been keenly interested in the development of the situation in Georgia. The Chinese delegation is deeply concerned at the insufficient progress achieved towards a comprehensive political settlement of the question of Georgia and at the obstruction of the return of refugees and displaced persons in the Abkhaz region. We also believe that in seeking a settlement of the question of Georgia the international community must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. In the meantime, the rights of the peoples of all the ethnic communities in the Abkhaz region must also be guaranteed. A sound solution to all conflicts and contradictions should be sought through peaceful means and negotiations.

In our view, a genuine solution to the situation in Georgia depends on the political will of all parties concerned. The United Nations efforts can play only a complementary role. In this connection we would express our appreciation for the new efforts being made by the Government of Georgia. We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for the tremendous efforts they have made to achieve a political settlement of the situation in Georgia and hope that all parties concerned will cooperate with them in seeking substantive progress at an early date towards a comprehensive settlement of the question.

We note the positive role played by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with respect to a political settlement and the return of refugees. UNOMIG has also maintained good relations of cooperation with the peace-keeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). We therefore support the proposal of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNOMIG and we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution before us. We hope that the draft resolution can give new and powerful impetus to the peace process in the Republic of Georgia.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1995/384 as orally revised in its provisional form.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Botswana, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*interpretation from French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution as orally revised in its provisional form has been adopted unanimously as resolution 993 (1995).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Firstly, Mr. President, allow me to join in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May and to express our delegation's readiness to do its utmost to support you in your work. We should also like to express our appreciation to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic for his excellent leadership last month.

I should also like to welcome to this meeting of the Council the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Georgia, Alexander Chikvaidze. We listened very carefully to his statement, and we agree with his basic assessment of the situation.

The Russian Federation has always assumed that a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is possible only on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and for the rights of the multi-ethnic people of that country. The resolution just adopted, in addition to the regular extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), contains some weighty political provisions. Its adoption is confirmation of the international community's commitment to ensuring a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia — with the understanding, of course, that the main responsibility for finding ways to resolve the crisis lies with the parties to the conflict.

The Russian Federation is seriously concerned at the minimal progress made in the negotiations, including those on the political status of Abkhazia. We find very timely the Security Council's reaffirmation of its call for substantive progress in the Georgian-Abkhaz talks, under United Nations auspices, which are being conducted with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator and with the participation of representatives of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Russian side is actively working in this direction.

During the consultations in Moscow between 18 April and 6 May with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Georgia and the Abkhaz leaders, it proved possible to come up with a number of agreements in principle. The parties reaffirmed their commitments not to allow the resumption of armed confrontations and agreed that they must and will live in a single State. At the same time, however, serious differences of views remained in their approaches to how that State should be organized. On 11 May, the consultations resumed.

I think it important that the Security Council has welcomed and supported the continuing consultations on the question of a new constitution for Georgia, based on federative principles, within the context of a comprehensive political settlement. We also appreciate the support expressed by the Council for the Russian Federation's efforts as facilitator in intensifying the quest for a peaceful settlement to the conflict. As facilitator, we attach the greatest importance to coordinating our efforts in close cooperation with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Georgia, Ambassador Edward Brunner.

We are seriously disturbed at the unacceptably slow rate of return of refugees, which is the fault of the Abkhaz side. Ensuring a safe return *en masse* of the refugees is a key issue whose solution will to a large extent determine the progress made on the other problems involved in settling the conflict. We hope that the strong position taken by the Security Council will finally be heeded by the Abkhaz side and have an impact on it.

We attach fundamental importance to the resolution's renewed call on States to contribute to the voluntary fund in support of the implementation of the Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces, including demining. We note also that the resolution expresses great appreciation for the contribution of UNOMIG and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force in stabilizing the situation in the zone of conflict and satisfaction at the close cooperation between them. We note also that it welcomed the additional measures both have taken to improve conditions for a safe and orderly return of refugees. We believe that those measures will help to improve the effectiveness of both missions in Abkhazia.

We are grateful to the leadership and, indeed, to all the personnel of UNOMIG for the extremely difficult work they have been doing. We are pleased at the spirit of mutual confidence and comradeship that has been demonstrated in the day-to-day contacts between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force.

As representative of the country presiding over the CIS, I should like to reaffirm our readiness to develop this cooperation further in the interests of ensuring the optimal conditions for a political settlement. We expect that the resolution we have just adopted will also help achieve such a settlement.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): At this our first opportunity during the month of May, may I extend the congratulations of my delegation to you on the assumption of the Council presidency. Clearly, this is the month for new French presidents. I wish to assure you of our cooperation and support.

May I also take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation and admiration to Ambassador Kovanda and his delegation for the Czech Republic's excellent stewardship of the Council during the month of April. And, finally, may I extend my delegation's welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia for his presence here today and through him we would like also to extend our greetings and best wishes to President Shevardnadze.

The Council members who informally constitute the "Friends of Georgia" and the other members of the Council have approached this extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with an unusually high degree of consensus. This is prompted by developments, some positive, some negative. Like other members of the Council, we are encouraged by the fact that the cease-fire has, by and large, been observed by both parties. At the same time, we share with other members the concern over the increasing number of violent incidents directed against innocent civilians and against members of UNOMIG and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force, in large part, by armed elements that the parties claim are outside their control. Both parties to the conflict must take steps to rein in these elements. UNOMIG will remain only as

long as the Council is satisfied that the parties are doing their utmost to protect UNOMIG personnel.

We also join other members of the Council in noting with encouragement the positive role UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force are playing and the effective coordination of these two separate missions. At the same time, however, we are profoundly disappointed at the lack of progress on the return of refugees and displaced persons and on negotiations toward a political settlement of the conflict. The parties must understand that the willingness of the Council to continue its support of these processes through the presence of UNOMIG depends on real progress in these matters. The Abkhaz party must cease its obstruction of refugee return, and both parties must work seriously and genuinely with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and with the active facilitation of the Russian Federation toward a political settlement.

Let me clarify my Government's support for extending UNOMIG for approximately eight months, a longer period than we have previously supported for UNOMIG. Our position does not mean greater satisfaction with the situation on the ground or with the negotiation process. Nor does it predict infinite willingness to extend UNOMIG if its presence is not contributing to progress toward a settlement. Rather, we believe that, assuming the CIS Heads of States' approval of an extension of the CIS peace-keeping operation until 31 December 1995, the Council will be in a better position in mid-January of 1996 to make a decision on UNOMIG's future, knowing the disposition of the CIS operation.

I would also like to share a few thoughts on what my Government sees as the vital task of enhancing UNOMIG's overall capabilities. While we support the important contribution UNOMIG has made on the ground, we believe it could be made even more effective. We would welcome a review by the Secretary-General of UNOMIG's budget and operations in light of the need to contain costs wherever possible. We are also interested in steps that could enhance the security of UNOMIG personnel. It is also important that UNOMIG's mandate be completely fulfilled, especially the directive to maintain close contacts with both parties to the conflict and, by its presence in the area, to contribute to conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons. UNOMIG should make better use of public information to promote the image of the United Nations as a helpful, neutral player.

Finally, we are concerned that the UNOMIG operations be recognized as fully supportive of Georgia's territorial integrity, which the Council has repeatedly affirmed. While the Abkhaz may have de facto control over a part of the Republic of Georgia, they do not have the rights of a sovereign State. UNOMIG's ability must be consistent with the position of the Council that it does not and will not accept Abkhaz independence.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Henze (Germany): First of all, I wish to join other delegations in congratulating you upon assuming the presidency of the Council. Having the privilege of working under your guidance as President of the European Union, it is a double pleasure for me to benefit from your great experience and diplomatic skills. I also would like to thank Ambassador Kovanda for his work as President of the Council during the past month. I refuse to join another delegate who qualified you as an able slave-holder. It is true we worked hard under your presidency but we did it always with pleasure.

I also would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Chikraidze to the Security Council. We have listened very carefully to his statement and we share his view that progress in the efforts to reach a political settlement is urgently needed.

As a member of the group of "Friends of Georgia", Germany was actively involved in the drafting of the resolution just adopted by the Council. My delegation is pleased that the Council was able to reach agreement without difficulty. Today's resolution reflects a unity of purpose, which we hope will have a positive effect on the parties.

On behalf of my Government, which was one of the contributors of personnel to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), I would like to express our gratitude to the Chief Military Observer, General Hvidegaard, and to the members of UNOMIG for the excellent work that the mission has been doing.

In this context, I would like to emphasize that we attach great importance to the increased presence and visibility of UNOMIG in the Gali region. The more active role of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force is equally welcome. We hope that UNOMIG and the CIS troops will sustain this new *modus operandi*.

At the same time, the security situation in the Gali region remains a cause for concern. The parties need to improve their cooperation with UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force. They must fully honour their obligations under the cease-fire agreement, particularly as regards restrictions on weapons in the security zone. They must ensure the safety and security of all UNOMIG and CIS personnel as well as their freedom of movement.

Once again, my delegation would like to express its thanks for the briefings offered by our Russian colleagues on the operation of the CIS peace-keeping force. We would be grateful if this information could be made available more frequently.

We share the great concern about the fate of the refugees. This is a problem which has to be solved as soon as possible. A secure environment is a prerequisite for a large-scale return of refugees and displaced persons. In this regard, there has been no improvement whatsoever since the Council passed resolution 971 (1995) four months ago. In fact, we have witnessed brutal attacks on the civilian population. In addition to improving security, the Abkhaz side must finally agree to a timetable for return. It must also make good on its offer to regularize the status of those returnees already in the Gali region, in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement.

Regarding the negotiations on a political settlement, we fully support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brunner. We also appreciate the increasing amount of work that is being done by representatives of the Russian Federation. The resolution stresses the need for substantial progress towards a political settlement. It also makes clear that joint effort and close coordination among all involved is needed in order to achieve results that meet the requirements set out by this Council.

In this context, I would like to repeat something my delegation has said on previous occasions. We accept that the Abkhaz side too has legitimate concerns. Abkhazia, with its multi-ethnic population, must be granted an appropriate degree of regional autonomy. However, any settlement must be in keeping with the principles set out in the Council's resolutions. In particular, it must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. We are encouraged that the Georgian Government and parliament, for their part, are ready to move towards federal structures.

Finally, I would like to underline that my Government regards the extension of UNOMIG's mandate for eight months as an exceptional measure in order to synchronize the duration of UNOMIG's mandate with that of the CIS peace-keeping force. In the future, we would prefer to return to a standard six-month period.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish at the outset to express the my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, the representative of France, presiding over the work of the Security Council for this month. I take this opportunity also to congratulate Ambassador Kovanda and the other members of the delegation of the Czech Republic on their outstanding work last month.

My delegation warmly welcomes the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Georgia, who is with us this afternoon.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for having prepared the report on which we have based our extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). In the course of our consideration of that report, we have already stated our concern on two points: the lack of substantive progress towards settlement of the conflict; and the serious situation of the human rights of refugees and displaced persons.

Here, as in other peace-keeping operations mandated by the Security Council, we are also concerned for full respect for the freedom of movement of the contingents sent to carry out these tasks, which is a key factor in ensuring their safety and security and their very ability to fulfil their mandate. It is, among other things, the attitude of the parties towards peace-keeping operations that reflects the degree of their commitment to settling the conflict that divides them.

Moreover, we consider that, taken as a whole, the efforts of the Government of Georgia to define and implement a federal constitutional solution to the conflict in the region of Abkhazia deserve sincere acknowledgement from the Security Council and the entire international community. In our view, full respect for the principle of territorial integrity serves not only the

specific interests of one State but also those of the international community as a whole.

All peace-keeping operations are different, for they reflect the specific elements of the issues they are intended to resolve. They all possess their own idiosyncrasies, and because the conflicts they are designed to deal with can change in various ways, they must be able to adapt to these changes. We consider therefore that Council mandates for peace-keeping operations cannot be conceived in rigid, static terms. On the contrary, each case demands the versatility needed to adapt the functioning of the operation to the specific needs of a given conflict at each phase of its development.

Hence, given that this conflict includes elements relating to respect for humanitarian law and for human rights, the Council should in our view begin considering these elements. We have learned that the presence of civilian observer missions is often very useful in verifying the degree of respect for these fundamental rights, as indicated by recent experience in other regions. It would therefore be wise to begin now to give specific consideration to such a possibility should circumstances in the field demand it.

In conclusion, we hope that our extension of the mandate of UNOMIG will constitute a genuine contribution to peace in Georgia, for that is the motivation we all share.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Argentina for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of May. Your energy and diligence have already left a splendid imprint on the Council's work.

It is furthermore a great pleasure to welcome in our midst Foreign Minister Chikvaidze and his colleagues. We recall an equally welcome visit just about a year ago from President Shevardnadze, from whom the Minister has brought us greetings.

Before turning to the matter at hand, let me further thank all those previous speakers who had words of appreciation for my delegation's work in April, work in which we enjoyed the true and unstinting assistance of every single delegation around this table — for which we are very grateful.

The situation in Abkhazia and its fallout on the rest of Georgia can be characterized in one sentence: Nothing much has changed, and this is, on balance, bad. My delegation, for one, is alarmed by this state of affairs, and feels that several points are worth making in elaborating upon that one sentence.

First point: The key to resolving the situation is the return of those who have fled Abkhazia to their former homes. Whatever political understanding might eventually be reached by politicians of the opposing parties, it would be intolerable if that understanding were based on demographic changes that have been brought about by military means. There are some 200,000 refugees and displaced persons, and only the tiniest trickle of them is returning under the voluntary repatriation programme. My delegation is pleased that we are invoking the timetable of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the return of displaced persons. The main obstacle to their return is still the continuing intransigent position of Abkhaz authorities.

Second point: The most problematic region is Gali. This is where most displaced people are from; this is where most of them therefore want to return to; yet this is where lawlessness is most rampant. The return of the original population to Gali should be the cornerstone of the whole repatriation programme. But in order for this to succeed, their basic human rights have to be respected, a task for which the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) does not have a mandate, let alone the wherewithal. Today, therefore, we request the Secretary-General to look into possibilities that might be available for improving the observance of human rights in the region in general.

Third point: What has been doing on in Abkhazia is "ethnic cleansing". Resolution 993 (1995), which we have just adopted, recognizes this fact but couches it in impenetrable language. Instead of calling a spade a spade, our resolution refers to a garden, assuming that the reader will grasp that there is a tool shed in the garden and a spade in the tool shed. This language should be decoded, of course, if only for the record.

We thus want to underscore here the fact that the eighth preambular paragraph, which recalls the 1994 Budapest summit declaration of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, is intended to refer especially to the following sentence of that document:

> "[The participating States] expressed their deep concern over 'ethnic cleansing', the massive expulsion of people, predominantly Georgian, from their living areas and the deaths of large numbers of innocent civilians." (*S/1994/1435, p. 20*)

Fourth point: While we are anxious for any political solution to the crisis that would be agreeable to both the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz leaders, we welcome their understanding that such a solution is to be based on Georgia's territorial integrity. A federal arrangement for the country would be very appropriate, with as much autonomy as feasible devolving to its constituent parts. But we do not see much merit in a confederation, which in practice would amount to a break-up of the country, or in any "federation of independent entities", which in practice would amount to a confederation and thus again to the break-up of the country. This is why the resolution welcomes and encourages consultations regarding a new constitution for the country based precisely on federal principles.

In this context, we reiterate our full confidence in Ambassador Brunner's efforts in this regard, undertaken on behalf of the Secretary-General. We also appreciate the assistance provided by the Russian Federation as facilitator and by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in searching for a comprehensive political settlement. Coordination between these several organisms is, of course, an absolute must.

My fifth and final point, on the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) forces: We are heartened and encouraged by their cooperation. At this moment, they constitute a stabilizing factor rather than one that is resolving the problem. Without their presence, though, another flare-up of uncontrollable hostilities would be extremely likely. This is why we are in favour of extending the UNOMIG mandate and welcome the fact that the CIS forces apparently intend to stay until the end of 1995. Like other delegations, we are grateful for information that the Russian delegation provides on the CIS operation, and would be even more grateful if it were more frequent and in writing.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers for this meeting. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.